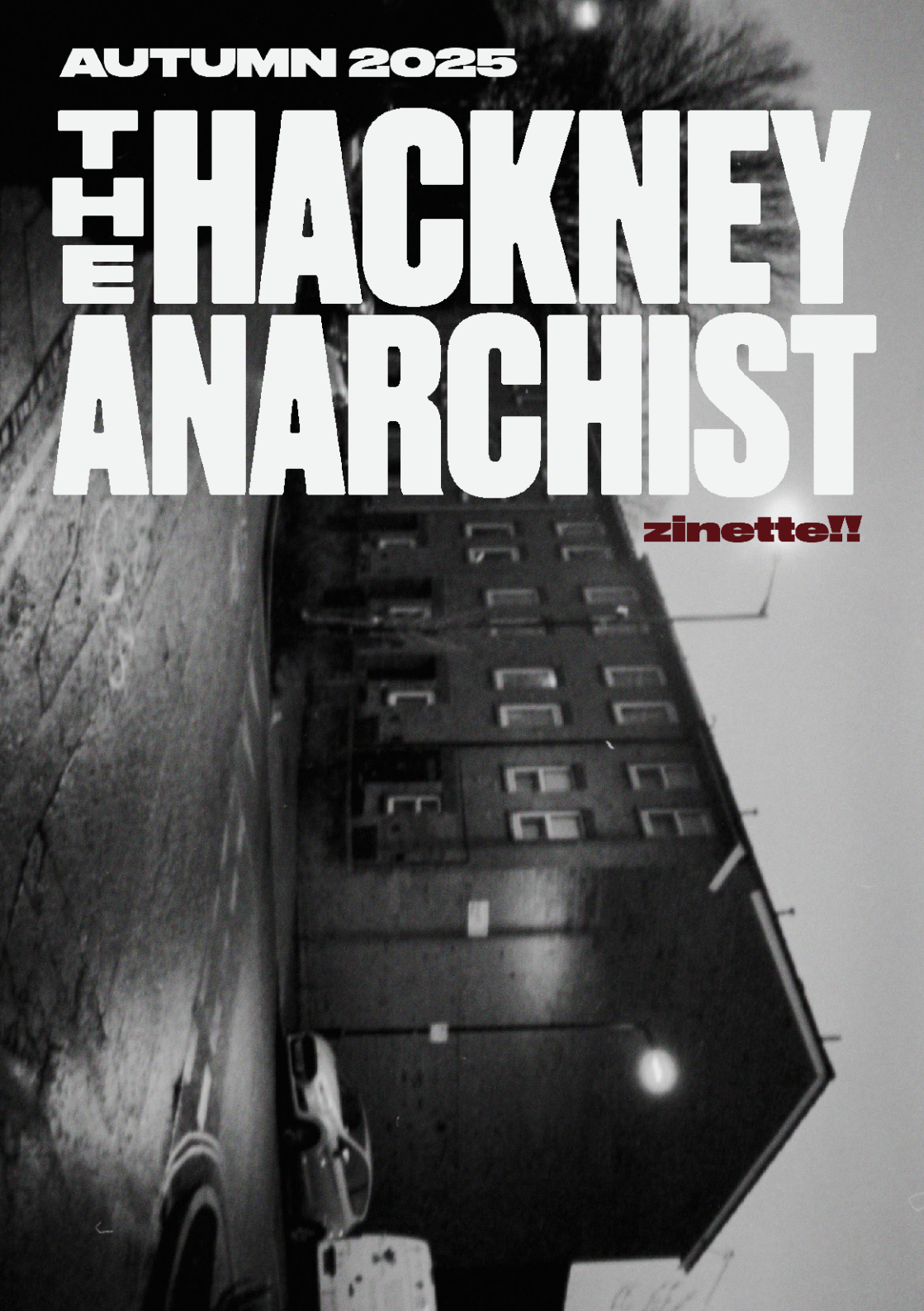
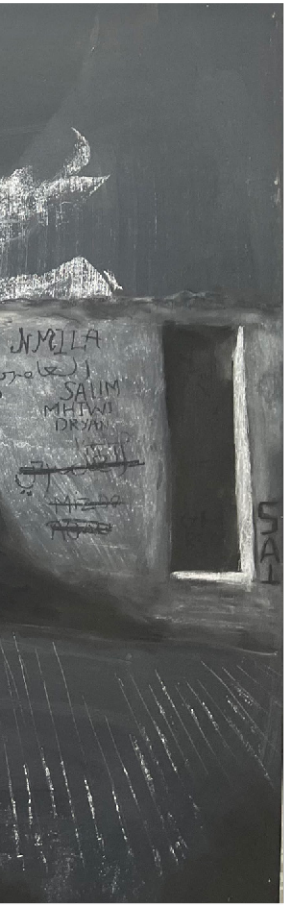
AUTUMN 2025

# THE HACKNEY ANARCHIST

zinette!!



Welcome to the Hackney Anarchist Zinette! The concept is simple – it's a Zine, but smaller, as signified by the 'ette' suffix. Our first Zine, published in April 2023, was filled with internal submissions. Since then, our Zine has got glossier, more colourful, more swole, and open to external submissions – giving a platform for pieces by anarchists well beyond Hackney: We've published submissions from Germany, Bosnia, Greece and USA, amongst other territories beyond the borough. We've published 5 Zines in total, but this time we decided to go back to our roots.



With the 2025 London Anarchist Bookfair fast approaching (Leake Street Tunnels, September 20th) we balked at the thought of an out-of-date stall. With this looming deadline, we decided to restrict our call to internal submissions – all content herein is produced by bona fide Hackney Anarchists! (in the sense that we all regularly attend the meetings – we don't endorse or enforce borders). We really hope that you enjoy our Zinette, and although the format is diminutive the content is BIG from the very first article.

# MAKE ANTIFA BIG AGAIN

I have a flashy winger's physique; all big hair, long thin legs and knock knees. You can call me the cardio dolphin. And yet I am still one of the larger men I ever see on anti-fascist demos. Apart from brief outbursts of support following the far right riots last year, the antifascist movement has not yet seen a popular explosion. As this question becomes more and more relevant, it begs others: how do we make antifascism broad, popular and successful? Which groups of people are not joining us? Clearly, if you have read my self-description, we can all see we have made antifascism sexy again. But how do we make it BIG again?

I know the pressure the radical left is under from the state and neoliberal economic system. I understand the issues the anaemic SUTR causes our movement. I understand and celebrate the anti-imperialist and trans and queer liberatory aspects of our movement. I understand the mistrust that many comrades have towards white men; I myself, scowl reflexively at bald white men in the days after I attend antifascist marches and counter demos. Despite all of this the narrowness of our movement becomes clearer and clearer to me. I know the pressure we are all under in our daily lives. What's better than standing awkwardly in a puddle? Being sexy and friendly in a puddle! But what's even better than that: being BIG.

I find this the paradox going on at the heart of antifascism today. As the far right grows and we seek to become more confrontational again, the crowds, the groups of people representing antifascism on the streets become smaller and the individuals are slighter. By successfully rooting out the large male macho side of our culture so prevalent during the 80s and 90s we have become less popular and physically less dominant. This means that both our counter demonstrations have become less successful and less combative. It is not just the responsibility of small T-boys and T-girls, already at the thin wedge of the political chisel wielded against us, to stand up to hate. They are vastly overrepresented in our movement and it's other groups responsibilities (looking at us, white men) to swole the movement further. It may even be the movement's responsibility to reach outside of ourselves to support this swelling. Would you even beat a fascist in an arm wrestle, bro?

In turn our tactics have had to change. We use large banners as shields in the face of larger groups of more violent men, as we hope conflict does not turn physical or the police manage to stand in their way. Being on the right side of history is great. But it's better to be BIG. I did not start antifascist work to be protected by the police. A kettle is not Cable Street. Whilst winning a physical fight is not a panacea, losing a fight is not an antifascist success. We are unintimidating, and the far right know it. Where are all the large antifascist men in England, and why are they not joining us? I want us to be sexy, successful and most of all, I want us to be BIG.

In the 80s on the football terraces both far right organisations and antifascist ones tried to recruit football hooligans to their causes and thus it became a place of not just physical, but political contestation. Why have we ceded the gym, the boozer, spoons, other awkward and uncomfortable sites outside the gentrified inner cities of large metropolitan areas to the right? The fash are back, they are feeling emboldened, and we need to look at ourselves as well, to see why they are more popular than us on the streets. Have a little bit of a think and help me to make the movement popular, make it sexy, make it BIG.

A las barricadas! SWOLE the movement!

Support your local self defence group. Support your local underdog sports club.

# WORKING IN A KNOWLEDGE MACHINE IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

> I work in a university where there is currently a drive to make assessment "AI-Proof". Universities are not alone in this knee-jerk reaction. Conversations with friends and comrades reveal swingeing policy changes are being forced through across all sorts of organisations and employment sectors in response to predictions, fears and projections about what AI might or might not be able to do in the very near future.
>
> In universities, this means pressure towards in-person exams as a major element of assessment. In critical social disciplines and humanities, exams have been out of favour for a long time. Nobody can engage in genuinely critical, creative and original thought under time-pressure in an exam hall, without access to research resources. Exams privilege students who are good at rote learning, and there is absolutely no reason someone couldn't rote-learn AI-generated responses to predicted questions.

The changes are being forced through too rapidly to properly consider how changing forms of assessment might disadvantage some students and disproportionately accelerate the privilege of others. There is little time to think about what this means for how we understand the nature of human learning.

This is being done at incredible speed, in reaction to the (perceived) threat of rapid developments in Generative AI, which *apparently* mean that it is becoming impossible to distinguish its human-prompted outputs from critical and creative meanderings that have passed through a human brain.

This raises questions of whether university assessments that can be so easily faked by a machine were ever assessing anything of value in the first place? Anti-authoritarian educators have long questioned the individualised nature of assessment in competitive and marketised universities – what does a well-referenced essay contribute to building community or transforming society? (Although it might help one develop the skills to write in an anarchist Zine, for example).

> There are many reasons for anarchists to resist AI within and beyond universities. Generative AI specifically is derivative – its natural language processing models plagiarise from the mush of information it is trained on (the selection of which is opaque in big tech models), often replicating racist, sexist and bourgeois ideology and idioms. It leans towards the average, generic and incontrovertible, replicating dominant archetypes and suppressing difference and marginalised voices. It propagates inaccurate information – fake news is no problem to AI so long as it looks convincing and the reader believes it. It is a manipulative technology. Chatbots are designed to trick people into thinking they're sentient. It is also dependency-forming, not only for individuals but for a society where holistic and meaningful tasks are split into units to aid efficiency, some of which are automated and some filled by cheap labour – alienating us all from the knowledge required to sustain ourselves and our communities. We are thus torn asunder from each other, from our environment, and from communal and ecologically-embedded ways of being, doing and relating that existed for millennia before profit-maximising technologies ripped us apart.

AI is designed to automate functional roles performed by humans under capitalism – this will push people out of jobs and deskill workers, but there are even more sinister implications when we think about the automation of control functions like management (we already see this with firms like Uber), surveillance, policing and justice.

I am wondering when us university "knowledge workers" might cotton-on, and turn to automated marking and feedback? Trials are already underway! Perhaps the future portends fully automated educational institutions where JudgeGPT MarkBots encounter ChatGPT EssayBots whilst students are freed for a life of leisure working minimum-wage jobs to pay fees to fat cat technocrats who administrate the whole affair via some Uber-style algorithm.

Many anarchist activists are quite rightly suspicious of universities – they have always been seen as ivory towers and sites of privilege that reproduce class divisions and maintain the status quo. Under neoliberalism, and especially after the introduction of student fees, although universities ostensibly grew to admit more working class and international students, they also became more exploitative, a new frontier of capitalism turning students into consumers of the 'education product' rather than valorising learning for interest, joy or community. Should it be any surprise – and should we even care – that some students are finding new ways to cheat when learning is already commodified and instrumentalised in terms of 'employability' and 'transferable skills' for the capitalist marketplace? They paid a lot of money for that qualification! And now we want them to work for it too?

What is the social role of universities? Is it to treat students as suspects, to surveil them and restrict their access to technologies that will shape and define their trajectories in the future world of work? Of course, there is much chat in universities too of facilitating students to work critically with AI, but unfortunately this is within an environment where few of us have effective knowledge, skills or training in these too-rapidly developing technologies to do this.

University qualifications are individualised as an instrumental stepping stone to survival-of-the-fittest in the capitalist career market. Any meaningful move towards more critical pedagogies or communal forms of learning and group assessment will always be resisted – often by students first and foremost! - and this is understandable, since without widespread social change it would disadvantage them in the future.

Nevertheless, universities are also sites of struggle and radicalism. Many anarchists were radicalised in universities, many university workers are radical. Historically many radical social movements began as student movements, or in solidarity between students, workers, and artists. Universities are sites of both social reproduction, and of resistance. Anarchists cannot give up on universities as sites of struggle any more than they can give up on capitalism as a site of struggle. Worries about AI are not unfounded, but neither is this a 'single issue', nor the paradigm-shifting earthquake it is being touted as – it is simply another frontier for capitalism and its states, and another where they must be resisted - within, against and beyond universities.

# WHAT WE BUILD NOW MAY DETERMINE WHAT SURVIVES THE WRECKAGE

Unlike previous eruptions in Britain, today's racist outrage is consistently organised. Protests are rapidly mobilised, digitally coordinated, openly backed by political forces and legitimised by mainstream media, who push the myth of a "migrant invasion threatening a decaying country."

This is part of a broader domestic and international counterinsurgency embedding the far right within Western societies. Fascists present themselves as defenders of working-class communities, co-opting the language and aesthetics of protest, all in service of white supremacy. Clashes with police are disciplinary theatre—reinforcing state power, not challenging it.

Anarchists and the anti-authoritarian left often appear disconnected from local communities, with little presence in the neighbourhoods or direct connections to refugees. We arrive as outsiders, sometimes facing kettling, harassment, and arrests.

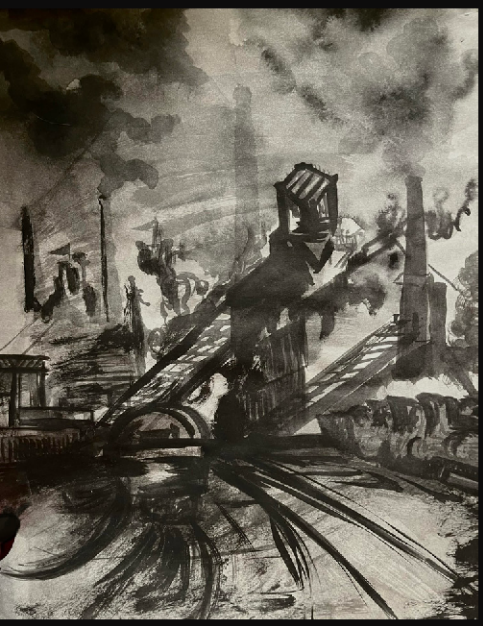
Mainstream accounts frame the far-right surge as a backlash to left failures—neoliberal betrayal, cultural elitism, identity politics "gone too far." But this obscures the deeper truth: Western societies long ago abandoned ideological politics, and whatever radicalism remained was absorbed and neutralised by social-democratic parties acting as pressure valves. Today's political irrelevance is the result of decades of co-option and betrayal.

The gap between consumerist comfort zones and excluded populations has become an unbridgeable chasm. Digital natives grow up immersed in a technologically curated reality. Inside the citadel of the wealthy Global North, most can meet their basic material needs, while outside survival itself is precarious. Yet on both sides of the wall, the capacity to imagine life beyond the dominant narrative is vanishing.

The new middle classes function as highly specialised technicians and computer operators in a fully automated dystopia that extracts and destroys at unprecedented levels. Those who fail to adapt are rendered expendable. Genocide and ecocide advance hand in hand—perhaps the bleakest picture humanity has painted in civilisation's history. Both the left and the right struggle to confront this reality in its full scale.

Governments steer reactionary domestic fronts—claiming to counter far-right drift while pushing anti-migrant policies. Repression is intense, with AI-driven surveillance defining a new society of control and feeding into a global shift toward a de facto wartime economy driven by the military–industrial complex. Militarised, racialised social orders prepare for war abroad and repression at home.

The far-right resurgence in the UK mirrors trends across Europe and the US. It is fuelled by wealthy donors and business interests, unfolding amid post-colonial restructuring. Nationalist militarism is global capitalism's go-to strategy for managing its own contradictions, demanding a compliant, racist, and surveilled population in exchange for hollow "security" and "sovereignty." War restructures society through displacement and discipline, always along racial lines.



New migration waves toward the citadels will continue, driven by deepening inequality, war, and ecological collapse. Migrants will remain scapegoats for crises they did not cause.

In the Middle East, this scapegoating turns genocidal. Palestinians—once a key source of precarious labour in Israel—have been rendered surplus. Racism so dehumanising it treats them as disease-carriers underpins the ongoing offensive: erasure of an indigenous population to consolidate a Greater Israel aligned with US interests and settler-colonial permanence.

The same logic that obliterates Gaza demonises migrants in Britain, criminalises dissent, and elevates white nationalism. Racism and xenophobia justify both foreign aggression and domestic repression. Liberalism cloaks this in the language of rights—but its function remains control. The UK's Public Order Act 2023 claims to preserve safety and democracy while criminalising protest and expanding police powers, wrapping repression in procedural fairness.

The left, meanwhile, clings to illuminated vanguardism and backs authoritarian regimes simply because they oppose the West. Reviving the ideological zombies of Marxist orthodoxy and party-line praxis will not get us out of this nightmare. The revolts of this century were announced as joyful majority movements grounded in the lives and resistance of the displaced, exploited, and exiled. Building trust in our communities means abandoning the ideological habits that isolate us and reduce us to joyless, miserable lifestyle cults.

Palestine, climate, migration—these are not separate struggles. Internationalist solidarity must stretch across all fronts. Our enemies are not only abstract "isms" or tanks and cops, but also patriarchy, borders, data centres, and propaganda systems—left and right—that sustain the global war economy.

As global restructuring accelerates, the left–right binary fades. Direct action beyond ideology and party politics gains traction among a new generation. We must revive revolutionary imagination and resist the cynical pessimism of rigid orthodoxy.

We don't need to reinvent the wheel—but we do need to joyfully rise to the occasion. Grassroots counter-information and deep community engagement remain as relevant as ever.

And we must have honest conversations with our leftist friends and allies: there hasn't been a single uprising in history that left leaders didn't betray. Disappointment will follow hollow promises for a "better" party.

The spectre of revolt from the past decades still lingers, and this reactionary wave is the elite's effort to stop it from taking form again. Our task is to crush the snake eggs before they hatch—to build bonds of trust, create spaces of refusal, and confront not just fascism but the system that breeds it. What it fears most is our capacity to live ungovernable.

# *MACHINES OF FORGETTING*

Every day, I follow the news; rather, the news chases me. As soon as I open my eyes and screen, I start to receive an influx of content: news reports, videos from the ground, and all the various formats of discourse around events, ranging from the scoffed-at infographic to the snarky tweet.

Many important things are happening: as censorship rewrites what remains archived and accessible — by erasing the documents that can no longer be published — a flood of new information redirects our attention towards a new source of anger, dread, and resentment each day. It seems that with the right conditions, any horror is possible. Palestinians murdered because of realpolitik. It is also clear that the state will rewrite its history as many times as is necessary. Whatever it takes to continue looking after its borders through its multiple war machines. Looking at you, so-called Labour Party, and flag-loving Keir Starmer. Respect for the suffragettes only acceptable one hundred years later.

Over a month ago, it was announced that Grenfell Tower would be demolished and built over. I remember feeling rage and grief at the erasure of this witness, a sort of anti-monument to the people that lived in the estate. The possibility that it could be redeveloped into anything resembling the fancy half-empty blocks that keep popping all over London. Then, I progressively lost track of the timeline, like I have lost track of others. The outrage left my mind, even though it stayed in my body in a distorted sense.

The crisis we are immersed in is also a machine that creates irrelevance and forgetting simply through its speed. It is spectacular. If I could see myself, would I look like a dulled version of Clockwork Orange? Taking it all in, driven by a combination of drives both noble — solidarity, duty, and the attempt to form my own opinion — and base — a thirst for that sweet, sweet dopamine. Unable to look away and unable to look back?

If you ask me, of course I can remember most events, narratives, antagonisms — even the nuances! However, I seldom practice this recall. I think only about the next thing and the next thing and the next thing, and making ends meet.

As a process driven by external and internal prompts, memory is relational and bound to communal narratives and shared affects. I often return to the idea that what each of us remembers is directly impacted by what our community remembers, not just in shared settings of collective memory, but in individual instances of recollection and remembrance. "There is no individual memory without social experience nor is there any collective memory without individuals participating in communal life[1]". Sometimes it feels like events and their shared significance might slip through my fingers, and with them, a specific community connection that has not fully been established in the collective. Or rather, that the community connections being forged are based on chasing and reacting to events like a dog trying to catch passing cars.

Whilst there is no remembering without forgetting, I would honestly like to have a bit more of a say in what I remember, and how it informs my political actions and my daily embodiment. My intention is not to contribute to the idea of lost futures and lost pasts. I feel like that would be the opposite of the point of anarchism, and while I was writing this essay I realised a fundamental error in this analysis. Not only is the crisis and its speed spectacular, but so is the idea that there is a fundamental collective loss of history, or the past. It is spectacular and simply wrong. It is just a feeling that feeds on itself, perhaps a desire to change things misplaced within despair. One just needs to look around at the efforts to preserve each bit of history and culture happening constantly.

We must continue to recognise and contribute to existing networks of remembrance, distributed across activist, community and interpersonal spaces. How do we slow down the processes of outrage and forgetting enough to drive creative responses that shift away from reactivity? It seems to me that shared memory practices enact the care principles of anarchism and reject the dread we are being fed: history walks, photo books, small archives, associations, events to celebrate, mourn, rage, shared meals and cooking, and growing legacies — all change how people talk about and frame their histories. These are the practices I turn to when it feels like timelines are collapsing onto themselves.

We need to resist this dopamine driven calendar of fragmentation with our own old and new rituals that preserve, recover and prefigure the structures we seek in our politics and visions. As anarchists, we reject so many different products and projects in favour of alternative ways of living and being. Let us reject these machines of forgetting.

*Do not forget, and do not forgive.*
*Bear witness and act!*

1 Olick, J.K. (2007) 'Collective Memory: The Two Cultures', in *The politics of regret: on collective memory and historical responsibility*. New York: Routledge.

Thank you to all our contributors past and future. Keep building community, caring for each other and developing radical action.

*The state does not care for us, we care for us!*

To any curious tourist that has picked up this Zinette at the Anarchist Bookfair: hopefully we have convinced you to meet us on the barricades. We'll be open to external submissions in our next issue too, so get thinking and writing!

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